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AN ASSESSMENT OF ASSESSMENT: IS SELECTIVE MANNING  
RIGHT FOR USAF SPECIAL OPERATIONS AIRCREW?

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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

REQUIREMENT

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MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

April 1995

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## ABSTRACT

TITLE: An Assessment of Assessment: Is Selective Manning Right for USAF Special Operations Aircrew?

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The United States Army, Navy, and Air Force all provide special operations forces to United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Two of these three services, the Army and the Navy, conduct rigorous assessment programs in their selection of special operations force (SOF) personnel. The US Air Force conducts no special assessment program, neither psychological nor physical, in selection of SOF aircrew personnel.

Both the Army and Navy stress a psychological assessment phase. This paper examines several psychological assessment vehicles, such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory and the Sixteen Personality Factor test, which could be integrated into a program that would select Air Force SOF aircrew based on, among other things, an individual's psychological predisposition. Historically, psychological assessment has proven effective since the days of World War II, and today both the Army and Navy continue to successfully man their SOF forces with personnel who are motivated, disciplined, focused and unrelenting in pursuit of mission accomplishment.

The US Air Force needs to give the same effort to selecting personnel for SOF as does the Army and Navy. Only when all three services impose the same demanding requirements for SOF personnel will SOCOM have a special operations force capable of succeeding anytime, anyplace.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel William E. Saier (M.P.A., Central Michigan University) has been in Air Force special operations since 1976. Before entering the US Air Force, Lt Col Saier served in the US Army as an infantryman, and performed combat duty with the 101st Airborne Division in Viet Nam from January through November, 1971. Lt Col Saier has served at Headquarters, Joint Special Operations Command and Headquarters, Pacific Air Forces. He was the operations officer for the 8th Special Operations Squadron and the commander of the 15th Special Operations Squadron. A Master Navigator, Lt Col Saier has over 3,500 flying hours primarily in the MC-130E and MC-130H Combat Talons. Lt Col Saier has served overseas in Viet Nam, Germany, Hawaii, and Saudi Arabia during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM. Lt Col Saier is a graduate of Air Command and Staff College, and is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1995.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **Introduction**

President Ronald Reagan once characterized the Soviet Union as the "Evil Empire." This characterization rationalized the continuation of the cold war and the United States' policy of containment. The pursuit of containment since the early 1980's meant the expenditure of vast sums of money for Department of Defense personnel and equipment. The demise and break-up of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall were hailed by the West as symbols of victory of the cold war; the Soviet threat was viscerated. Now, the American public and Congress clamored, was the time for the "Peace Dividend." To the military, the "peace dividend" meant budget cuts, personnel reductions, downsizing of force structure (equipment and people), base closings, and postponement of new weapons systems. But the break-up of the Soviet Union brought the United States other things in addition to the "peace dividend." It brought regional turmoil in areas formerly controlled by US and Soviet bi-polar interests. As the lone remaining "Super Power," the United States became almost singularly responsible to act as the one-and-only world's policeman in places such as Rwanda, Somalia, northern Iraq, Bosnia, or Haiti. Today, the United States military is clearly facing the tough task of doing more with less. The tempo of US military operations is higher today than any time in recent history. Recently, 30 percent of the US Army's active duty combat divisions were considered below "combat ready." Despite shrinking assets, military leadership must be innovative and forward thinking to provide for the nation's defense during these challenging times.

In Total Quality Management (TQM) and Quality Air Force (QAF) training and education, an enduring principle continually comes forth: The best quality of "Quality" is about

doing things more effectively, more efficiently - doing the right things right and using fact-based decision making. The Air Force, to be successful into the twenty-first century, must adopt ways and means of performing its mission more effectively and efficiently.

This paper will address the following question: Could a formal personnel selection process, including vigorous psychological assessment, result in a more capable Air Force Special Operations Force (AFSOF)?

This paper explores the historical precedent of the use of psychological analysis in assessing and selecting personnel based on specific personality traits. It then examines the selection and assessment process and programs of the Air Force's sister Special Operations Force (SOF) counterparts in the US Army and US Navy. It also addresses some of the key personality and psychological traits found in successful combat leadership. Finally, several personality trait assessment mechanisms are examined as potential tools to determine personality type and preference, and how that could relate to improved accomplishment of the Air Force's special operations mission.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Historical Perspective**

The United States military can trace its use of psychological assessment of personnel at least as far back as World War I. The National Research Council was designated as the Council of National Defense's research arm and was directed to coordinate war-related scientific research. As a result, psychological tests were developed to weed-out unacceptable draftees and identify potential officers.<sup>1</sup>

An area of far more relevance was the psychological assessment performed by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II. The OSS is considered to be the forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), but it also provides a line of heritage to today's military SOF. In 1943, the OSS was rather haphazardly recruiting personnel (spies) without benefit of any formal evaluation process. An OSS official stationed in London suggested adoption of a psychological-psychiatric assessment method, similar to the program being used by the British and their War Office Selection Board (WOSB). This suggestion quickly resulted in the establishment of a "school" staffed with psychologists and psychiatrists to assess and select new recruits. The goal of the selection/assessment process was to eliminate "bad" recruits.<sup>2</sup>

In the beginning, no general principles of assessment had been established, largely because the laws of personality on which they must be founded had yet to be formulated and verified.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Alan I. Marcus and Howard P. Segal, Technology In America - A Brief History. (San Diego, CA: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1989), pp. 244-245.

<sup>2</sup>The OSS Assessment Staff, Assessment of Men, (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1948), pp. 4-6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 26.



The OSS assessment team was responsible for establishing their own program, and towards that end they determined their task to be "that of developing a system of procedures which would reveal personalities of OSS recruits to the extent of providing grounds for sufficiently reliable predictions of their usefulness to the organization..."<sup>4</sup> The OSS assessment staff viewed the words "sufficiently reliable" as important, because that would provide the basis of the program's cost - benefit analysis.

The staff's goal was the elimination of some recruits and the better placement of others, to decrease the ultimate failures of unsatisfactory performers by such a number that: the amount saved *plus* the amount of harm prevented *plus* the amount gained is *greater* than the cost of the assessment program. In the analysis of costs, the assessment staff explained the above formula as:

The *amount saved* can be roughly computed in terms of the average expenditure of money and time in training, transporting, housing, and dealing with an individual who in the end proves incapable of discharging his duties properly. The most important item, the *amount of harm prevented*, is scarcely calculable. It consists of the friction, the impairment of efficiency and morale, the injury to the reputation of an organization that results from the actions of a man who is stupid, apathetic, sullen, resentful, arrogant, or insulting in his dealings with members of his own unit or of allied units, or with customers or citizens of foreign countries. To this must be added the irreparable damage that can be done by one who blabs. Diminution in the number of men of this stamp - sloths, irritants, bad actors, and free talkers - was one of the prime objects of the assessment program. The *amount gained* is equally hard to estimate. It consists of the average difference between the positive accomplishments of a failure and of a success. An unsatisfactory man, by filling an assignment, deprives the organization of the services of a man who might be capable of a substantial contribution. Some OSS schemes, in fact, were entirely abandoned because in each case the man who arrived in the theater to undertake the project was found to be unsuitable. Thus every pronounced failure costs the organization a good deal of time and money, lowers the efficiency and reputation of one of its units, and, by taking the place of a competent man, prevents the attainment of certain goals.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 8-9.

The above cost - benefit observations, both in terms of the tangible and intangible, is perhaps as valid for SOF today as they were for the OSS in 1943.

The OSS assessment staff concluded that assessment is preferable when 1) an institution must pass on the suitability of 400-1,000 candidates per year, and 2) the quality of selectees is of considerable importance, and 3) the requirement is to work effectively with others either as leader or cooperator.<sup>6</sup> The OSS assessment staff settled on seven major variables they measured to determine an individual's suitability. These variables were: motivation for assignment; energy and initiative; effective intelligence; emotional stability; social relations; leadership; and security. These same traits are very similar to the leadership characteristics found in successful combat leaders, to be addressed later.

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 465.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **US Army SOF Selection and Assessment Program**

United States Army SOF have not only drawn on the selection and assessment experience of the OSS and CIA, but also have drawn from principles developed by the British. The British Special Air Service (SAS) provided much of the rationale for the use of personality and psychological assessment in their selection process. The SAS used as it's guidelines for selecting personnel: "The unrelenting pursuit of excellence; maintaining the highest standards of discipline in all aspects of daily life; all ranks in the SAS are of 'one company' in which a sense of class is both alien and ludicrous; and humility and humor - both these virtues are indispensable in the everyday life of officers and men."<sup>7</sup> SAS candidates are given computational tests, both the 16PF (Personality Factor) and psycho-dynamic tests. The psychologists look for those who are: above average intelligence; assertive; self-sufficient; and not extremely introverted or extroverted. They do not necessarily want people who are emotionally stable; instead they want "forthright" individuals, who are hard to fool and not dependent on others.<sup>8</sup> Britain's other special operations force, the Special Boat Service (SBS) have as their motto: "Not by strength, by guile."<sup>9</sup> Their approach is similar to that of the SAS, but they also select for "Machiavellianism."<sup>10</sup> Both of these elite British special operations units recognize the importance of the psychological

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<sup>7</sup>James Adams, Secret Armies. (New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987), pp. 18-19.

<sup>8</sup>Peter Watson, War On The Mind: The Military Uses and Abuses of Psychology. (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978), p. 374.

<sup>9</sup>Adams, Secret Armies. p. 19.

<sup>10</sup>Watson, War On The Mind. p. 374.

dimension of the warrior. The psychological aspect of the individual plays an important part in the selection of US Army SOF personnel.

In 1952 at Fort Bragg, NC, Army Special Forces began to take shape. Early on, not the brawn but the brain was recognized as the most important asset of a SOF warrior. Some common attributes that need be present were outlined by a SF Group Commander:

Let's say *adaptability*. In other words, he's capable of adjusting to new and changing situations and stresses, and he bears up well under the pressure. He has *ambition*, seeks and welcomes additional, more important responsibility. He is *cooperative* - works in harmony with others as a team. And *dependable* - consistently accomplishes the desired action with a minimum of supervision. The very nature of our business is that we're completely on our own with indigenous forces. We have no one to turn to. We do it ourselves. And we must be able to count on a man working with a minimum of supervision. He has got to have *enthusiasm*; he's got to motivate others with his zeal. He must have *force*, execute his actions vigorously. *Ingenuity* - the very basis of SF operations is the ability to make something out of nothing. He's got to have *initiative* - the ability to take necessary and appropriate action on his own. *Intelligence* goes without saying. *Judgment* - he thinks logically and makes practical decisions right down the line. *Loyalty*, moral courage. *Self-discipline*. *Self-improvement*. In other words, he is willing to take action to improve himself constantly. *Stamina* - he performs successfully under constant physical and mental stress. *Tact* - he says and does what is appropriate without giving unnecessary offense, understanding and appreciating another's viewpoint.<sup>11</sup>(emphasis added)

Many, if not all of these attributes, are what the Army's Special Forces (Green Berets) are trying to find in their candidates today.

From start to finish, formal training for some Green Berets can last as long as a year. Recalling some of the cost-benefit analysis from the OSS experience, special units with long training periods need to have some reasonable assurance that those that enter training will finish training, and finish as a "product" which the organization will find useful. To achieve this, the Green Berets use an initial three-week selection course to assess candidates for entrance into

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<sup>11</sup>Charles M. Simpson, III, Inside the Green Berets. (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983),

formal qualification training. During this three-week course, candidates perform day and night land navigation problems with full rucksacks. They experience a five day long sleep-deprivation course to evaluate their mental stamina. They undergo psychological testing; if there is a flaw in the candidates personality, the testers believe it will surface from the mental and physical ordeal of the selection course. The result is that half of the candidates drop out or are dropped during this three-week course. Those who successfully complete the selection course proceed into the Special Forces Qualification Course, which continues to test the physical and mental abilities of the candidates throughout their training.<sup>12</sup>

Another Army unit has an even more strenuous and rigorous selection/assessment program. Never publicly acknowledged by the Pentagon, the "Delta Force" has a selection rate often below 12 percent.<sup>13</sup> In his book "The Commandos," Douglas Waller details the selection process of Delta.

A one-month selection and assessment course is a ruthless weeding out of soldiers not fit for Delta. The trainers use a combination of land navigation, psychological tests, and enforced isolation to thin the ranks. After a one-week course of PT and swim tests, he pays his first visit to Delta's team of psychiatrists. The applicant takes a battery of psychological tests and answers hundreds of questions: What's your family like? How do they feel about you joining Delta Force? Do you have a drinking problem? Do you ever feel that you're being followed? Do you feel ugly? The psychiatrists try to assemble a psychological profile on each man. The doctors are looking for a stable individual, someone with an anchor in his life. Lone wolves, immature soldiers, those with a criminal bent are sent packing. A delicate psychological balance must be found. "The psychiatrists want to make sure you're not too willing to pull the trigger, but at the same time you're not too hesitant."

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p. 23.

<sup>12</sup>Douglas C. Waller, The Commandos. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), p. 46.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 201, 217.

In the second week applicants are worn down physically; trainers want applicants to begin the next period already exhausted. During the eighteen-day formal selection course, the students experience information deprivation. In the stress phase of this period, the applicant is tested on how well he operates alone. Trainers don't shout at the applicants; nor do they encourage them. The experience is unnerving to American GIs who thrive off the military's "buddy system." For many of the candidates, the combination of physical stress and isolation becomes too much. They quit. By the end of this eighteen-day period, seventy-five percent of the candidates have quit or been eliminated for poor performance. Those left march forty miles in two days through the Appalachian mountains.

The final phase begins immediately upon completion of the march. Candidates are given eighteen hours to read and write a book report on a military subject. Trainers measure mental alertness after near-total physical exhaustion and forty-eight hours without sleep. After the book report period, the candidates spend a second session with the psychiatrists. They are given another battery of tests, and often the same interview questions are asked again. The final hurdle is the commander's board. Each candidate is questioned by Delta's commander and five squadron leaders. Impossible questions are asked: "You're behind enemy lines and a little girl picking flowers spots you. Are you willing to strangle her to continue your mission?" "An informant offers you critically important intelligence information that will tremendously affect the national security of your country. But, he'll give it to you only if you perform a homosexual act with him. Will you do it?" "You are ordered by the National Command Authority to Los Angeles to assassinate three known terrorists as they leave a hotel. Will you carry out the operation or question whether it is a lawful order?" There are no correct answers; the commander and his staff are conducting one final test to see how the candidate stands up under pressure. Does he get flustered by the questions? Will he be flappable under pressure or with terrorists in a standoff? The psychiatrist and head of selection and training appear before the board with their evaluations. Decision to accept a candidate is made by majority vote with the commander having overrule authority.<sup>14</sup>

This selection process achieves its purpose. It reveals clearly those candidates who have character - real determination, self-discipline and self-sacrifice - and those who do not. It shows who has the sense of purpose, the courage, the will, the guts to reach down inside themselves for that intangible trait that enables them to carry on; without that ability a man does not succeed.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 216-221.

<sup>15</sup>Adams, Secret Armies. pp 103-104.

Regarding US Army SOF selection and assessment, "... a key aspect becomes crystal clear: It is structured to put the maximum psychological pressure on those being tested. The individual is provided the freedom to succeed or fail on his own. A candidate not only must know his physical, mental, and emotional makeup, but must be able to use it to his advantage."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Terry Griswold and D.M. Giangreco, Delta, America's Elite Counterterrorist Force. (Osceola, WI., Motorbooks International, 1992), p. 46.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **US Navy SOF Selection and Assessment Program**

Becoming a US Navy SEAL is as demanding, difficult and rigorous as the Army's program. As opposed to the formal psychological assessments used by the Army, the SEALs psychological assessment resides primarily in a portion of their training curriculum referred to as "Hell Week." Early in the year-long SEAL training program, the sixth week to be exact, SEAL candidates endure Hell Week.<sup>17</sup>

Hell Week, for all its physical demands, is basically a test of a man's mental and emotional makeup rather than his physical condition. He learns what it takes to keep going when his own internal fuel gage screams "empty!" The test thus takes into account that the demands upon a SEAL are basically different from those on most other military men. A soldier who tires can always sit beside the road. But a SEAL who locks out of a submarine on a mission has to keep going until the job is done. And he must continue to use his head no matter how tired he is.<sup>18</sup>

SEALs believe that a man driven to the limits of his endurance during Hell Week can withstand the rigors and horrors of SEAL combat. Hell Week teaches a commando to turn off pain and focus on his mission. It's a simple concept: Hell Week teaches a commando that pain ultimately resides in the mind. The mind can make the body do things the body never thought possible. The mind can make a body endure pain and discomfort it never thought could be endured - not by drugs, but by sheer will power.<sup>19</sup>

In 1986 the Navy attempted to determine if there was some difference between SEAL candidates, successful and unsuccessful, which could be determined before SEAL training

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<sup>17</sup>Orr Kelly, Brave Men, Dark Waters. (Novato, CA., Presidio Press, 1992), pp. 84-85.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>19</sup>Douglas C. Waller, The Commandos. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), pp. 105-106.



commenced. To do this, they studied 336 candidates of three consecutive classes entering the Navy's Basic Underwater Demolition/SEALS (BUDS) training. Of the 336 candidates, 62 completed the training and became SEALs, 274 did not. At the beginning of training, all candidates received a battery of tests. The test battery included: The Physical Estimation and Attraction Scales (PEAS); The Profile of Mood States (POMS); The Tennessee Self Concept Scale (TSCS); and the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI). The psychological areas explored by some of these tests include: Tension; Depression; Anger; Vigor; Fatigue; Confusion; Intellectance; Adjustment; Prudence; Ambition; Sociability; Likeability; Validity; Service Orientation; Resiliency; Reliability; Clerical Potential; Sales Potential; and Managerial Potential.

Those who successfully completed the course were tested again in the final week before their graduation. Physical differences between graduates and dropouts were insignificant. In terms of age, height, weight, and percent of body fat, the differences were negligible, and in some cases, even reversed between the test groups. Psychologically however, based on the test data, candidates who graduated *differed* from those who dropped out. In areas such as Adjustment, Likeability, Service Orientation, and Managerial Potential, there was significant difference. Adjustment measures self-esteem, self-confidence, and freedom from anxiety. Likeability measures the extent to which individuals are cordial and even-tempered. Service Orientation identifies persons disposed to be helpful (teamwork - a cornerstone of SEAL training) and courteous. Managerial Potential predicts success in occupations that require leadership ability, planning, and decision-making skills. Thus graduates appear to show more physical self-confidence, self-esteem, teamwork skills, and leadership potential than those who dropped out of

the program.<sup>20</sup>

To succeed as a SEAL obviously requires a high level of intelligence, the ability to adapt, the ability to master one's own fear, extreme self-control, self-discipline, and self-confidence. The Navy's efforts to develop a test which would be an effective and reliable predictor of who has the emotional and mental characteristics to become successful SEALs have thus far not succeeded. One reason is the difficulty of sorting the subtle differences in personality appraisal. Another reason is the resistance from the SEALs themselves to be placed neatly into little slots developed by scientists.<sup>21</sup>

In his book Green Berets, SEALs, and Spetsnaz, John Collins describes the "essence" of all special operations force personnel. Much of what he says focuses on the psychological rather than the physical.

Forces assigned special operations tasks must possess special talents and skills. Innate intelligence, physical strength, agility, stamina, and standard training are not enough. Temperaments also must combine resourcefulness, ingenuity, pragmatism, and patience with self-discipline and dependability. Even common tasks call for uncommon skills applied under common circumstances. Any malcontent can murder or maim indiscriminately, but it takes expertise and meticulous planning to pick proper targets, times, places, parlay results into political capital, and replicate successful processes repeatedly. Only full-time master craftsmen have sufficient skill to accomplish these tasks. Amateurs and mediocre professionals never last long.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>D.G. McDonald, J.P. Norton, and J.A. Hodgdon, "Training Success in U.S. Navy Special Forces." *Aviation, Space and Environmental Medicine*, Vol. 61, No. 6, June 1990, pp. 548-554.

<sup>21</sup>Waller., pp. 96-97.

<sup>22</sup>John M. Collins, Green Berets, SEALs and Spetsnaz. (Washington DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1987), p. 82.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Leadership In Combat: Important Characteristics**

A study group from the History Department of the United States Military Academy was commissioned to study successful combat leadership to identify traits and characteristics that should be institutionalized. Over 200 combat leaders and engagements were evaluated. There were five personal characteristics found to be present in every successful case, and in the absence of these traits, disaster ensued. These traits were: terrain sense (of particular importance to the Army); single-minded tenacity; ferocious audacity; physical confidence; and practical, practiced judgment.<sup>23</sup> Each of these characteristics deserve a brief examination.

*Terrain Sense* is the ability to quickly and almost intuitively judge the terrain. It often goes beyond the landscape, to the ability to visualize the battle and the weapons to be used. This brings to mind the term *coup d'oeil*, a term used by Clausewitz to describe the ability to quickly and accurately survey and assess the situation confronting the commander.

*Single-Minded Tenacity* is the imaginative, driving intensity to accomplish the mission using everything available. In other terms, it was not the refusal to surrender, rather that surrender as an option simply did not occur to the commander. This is tied to a strong sense of moral courage and scrupulous ethical conduct.

*Audacity*, the willingness to take reasoned but enormous risks. This trait is closely linked to a positive self-image, a feeling of certitude about themselves. Self-doubt was a rare thing.

*Physical Confidence* and health enhanced self-image. This is often tied to a strong sense of self-discipline required to achieve and maintain physical fitness and health.

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<sup>23</sup>United States. Army Armor School, "Leadership in Combat: An Historical Appraisal,"

*Practiced, Practical Judgment* was present in the form of the most uncommon of virtues, common sense. Successful leaders have the ability to separate the vital from the unimportant, the immediate from the casual, truth from deception, and the deliberate from the accidental. Improved with experience, this trait was still discernible early.<sup>24</sup>

The study also looks at some characteristics of unsuccessful leaders. Indecisiveness was a characteristic often present; in effect, a decision to do nothing. Indecisiveness and inaction allow events to take this leader by surprise. Often this leader magnifies every threat until he is finally paralyzed by the fear produced from an overactive imagination. In a West Point annual, one cadet was described as "indifferent, easy going, and happy-go-lucky." This cadet later lost half his regiment and surrendered the rest without seriously engaging the enemy.<sup>25</sup>

The study found surprising consistency among successful leaders, regardless of historical period, country, or condition of combat. In *no* case did a unit overcome the deficiencies of its leader; in almost all cases the leader overcame startling unit deficiencies and incredible problems. The qualities of an individual's personality which set him apart from others and make him one others will follow are probably present at every point in a successful leaders career.<sup>26</sup> Now to look at possible methods to determine if an individual possesses certain personality traits that would enhance the potential for success, identify them as potential leaders, and/or increase the probability of mission accomplishment in the SOF environment.

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by LTC Kenneth E. Hamburger. Ft. Knox, KY. 1983. p. 1.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 1-3.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **Methods of Psychological Assessment**

Personality assessment can be defined as "the set of processes used by a person or persons for developing impressions and images, making decisions and checking hypotheses about another person's pattern of characteristics which determine his or her behavior in interaction with the environment."<sup>27</sup> The concept of using an assessment program for selection to SOF aircrew duty would be to determine, by appropriate psychological means, the best "type" of person to work in the demanding SOF aviation environment. The term "type" relates to the individual's personality characteristics and traits. This paper does not presume to offer that one "personality" is the "superior personality." Each personality type has its own inherent strengths and weaknesses.<sup>28</sup> There are several psychological assessment methods for measuring and or determining the aspects and dimensions of an individual's personality. Personality tests are instruments for the measurement of emotional, motivational, interpersonal, and attitudinal characteristics, as distinguished from abilities.<sup>29</sup> Analysis of some of the psychological assessment methods (tests) offers insight into their potential use as tools for enhancing the SOF aircrew selection process.

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<sup>27</sup>Norman D. Sundberg, Assessment of Persons. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Prentice-Hall, 1977), pp. 21-22.

<sup>28</sup>Isabel Briggs Myers, Introduction to Type. (Palo Alto, CA. Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc. 1993), p. 3.

<sup>29</sup>Anne Anastasi, Psychological Testing. (London. Collier-Macmillan, Ltd., 1968), p. 437.

## **The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)**

The MMPI is a widely used personality inventory. As a test for adults from age 16-up, it consists of some 550 questions that are answered as either "true," "false," or "cannot say." The MMPI was originally developed to assess traits commonly characteristic of disabling psychological abnormality.<sup>30</sup> The MMPI provides scores on the following ten "clinical scales:"

Hs (Hypochondriasis) - shows abnormal concern with bodily functions. High scorers have been described as cynical and defeatist.

D (Depression) - shows extreme pessimism, feelings of hopelessness, and slowing of thought and action. High scorers are usually shy, despondent, and distressed.

Hy (Conversion Hysteria) - uses physical or mental symptoms as a way of unconsciously avoiding difficult conflicts and responsibilities. High scorers tend to complain of multiple symptoms.

Pd (Psychopathic Deviate) - shows a repeated and flagrant disregard for social custom, emotional shallowness, and an inability to learn from punishing experiences. High scorers are adventurous, courageous, and generous.

Mf (Masculinity-Femininity) - shows homoeroticism and items differentiating between men and women. High scorers (men) have been described as esthetic and sensitive.

Pa (Paranoia) - shows abnormal suspiciousness and delusions of grandeur or persecution. High scorers are characterized as shrewd, guarded, and worrisome.

Pt (psychasthenia) - shows obsessions, compulsions, abnormal fears, and guilt and indecisiveness. High scorers are fearful, rigid, anxious and worrisome.

Sc (Schizophrenia) - shows bizarre or unusual thoughts or behavior, withdrawn and experiencing hallucinations. High scorers are unusual and withdrawn.

Ma (Hypomania) - shows emotional excitement, overactivity, and flight of ideas. High scorers are called sociable, energetic, and impulsive.

Si (Social Introversion) - shows shyness, little interest in people, and insecurity. High scorers are modest, shy, and self-effacing.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 441.

<sup>31</sup>Sundberg, Assessment of Persons. p. 183, and Robert M. Liebert and Michael D.

The MMPI was developed to aid in the diagnosis of psychiatric patients, but it has also been extensively used in personality research and in "normal" psychology. For example, in a study conducted with several hundred Stanford University students graduating in Business, speed of advancement and income ten years later were predicted well above "chance" level from the MMPI scores of the MMPI test.<sup>32</sup> It appears the MMPI could provide utility in assessing the absence, or presence of "disabling" psychological traits in the selection of personnel for important, high-risk tasks.

### **The California Psychological Inventory (CPI)**

The California Psychological Inventory in many ways is considered an MMPI for normal personality. Rather than concern itself with a "pathological" nature, it is designed to measure the dimensions of normal personality such as: Dominance; Sociability; Tolerance; Achievement via independence; and flexibility. Traits are grouped into four categories which measure: poise, ascendancy, and self-assurance; socialization, maturity, and responsibility; achievement potential and intellectual efficiency; and intellectual and interest modes.<sup>33</sup> This 480 true-false question test scales 18 traits. The scales discriminate well on non-psychiatric criteria such as leadership. As an example of the potential utility of the CPI, the test has predicted achieving and underachieving high school students more accurately than an IQ test.<sup>34</sup>

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Spiegler, Personality: Strategies and Issues, (Homewood, IL., The Dorsey Press, 1978), p. 240.

<sup>32</sup>Liebert and Spiegler, Personality: Strategies and Issues, pp. 241-243.

<sup>33</sup>Frederick G. Brown, Principles of Educational and Psychological Testing. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1983), p. 406.

<sup>34</sup>Liebert and Spiegler, Personality: Strategies and Issues, p. 243.

Harrison Gough describes the purpose of the CPI as, "to predict what an individual will do in a specified context, and/or to identify individuals who will be described in a certain way."<sup>35</sup>

Within the context of a test involving college students, the following CPI traits and characteristics are defined and illustrated.

Do (Dominance) - identifies individuals who would behave in a dominant, ascendant manner, who in interpersonal situations would take the initiative and exercise leadership and who would be seen as forceful, self-confident, and capable of influencing others. High scoring male (HSM) characterizations: ambitious, dominant, forceful, optimistic, planful, resourceful, responsible, self-confident, stable, stern. Low scoring male (LSM) characterizations: apathetic, indifferent, interest narrow, irresponsible, pessimistic, restless, rigid, reckless, suggestible, submissive.

Cs (Capacity for Status) - appraises those qualities of ambition and self-assurance that underlie, and lead to, status. HSM characterizations: discreet, forgiving, imaginative, independent, mature, opportunistic, pleasant, praising, progressive, reasonable. LSM characterizations: bitter, gloomy, greedy, interest narrow, nagging, resentful, restless, tense, touchy, unkind.

Sy (Sociability) - assesses correlation with various indices of social participation. HSM characterizations: clever, confident, interests wide, logical, mature, outgoing, reasonable, resourceful, self-confident, sociable. LSM characterizations: awkward, bitter, cold, complaining, confused, hard-hearted, interests narrow, quitting, shallow, unkind.

Sp (Social Presence) - embodies social poise, verve, and spontaneity. HSM characterizations: adventurous, interests wide, pleasure-seeking, relaxed, self-confident, sharp-witted, unconventional, uninhibited, versatile, witty. LSM characterizations: appreciative, cautious, cooperative, interests narrow, kind, mannerly, patient, prudish, serious, shy.

Sa (Self-acceptance) - identifies a comfortable and imperturbable sense of personal worth; security and self-assurance in social behavior. HSM characterizations: confident, enterprising, egotistical, imaginative, opportunistic, outgoing, polished, self-confident, self-seeking, sophisticated. LSM characterizations: bitter, commonplace, interests narrow, quitting, reckless, submissive, tense, unintelligent, withdrawn, self-denying.

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<sup>35</sup>Paul McReynolds, Advances in Psychological Assessment, (Palo Alto, CA., Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1968), p. 56.



Wb (Sense of Well-being) - an undue emphasis on personal problems and negative sentiments. HSM characterizations: conservative, dependable, dependent, good-natured, inhibited, logical, pleasant, poised, praising, relaxed, sincere. LSM characterizations: anxious, blustery, distractible, forgetful, hurried, impulsive, mischievous, quitting, shallow, restless.

Re (Responsibility) - such as civic responsibility, self-discipline, and fiscal integrity. HSM characterizations: capable, conscientious, dependable, reasonable, reliable, responsible, serious, stable, steady, thorough. LSM characterizations: careless, disorderly, forgetful, irresponsible, lazy, mischievous, pleasure-seeking, reckless, show-off, spendthrift.

So (Socialization) - classifies from highly asocial and criminal disposition to highly socialized and rule-respecting behavior. HSM characterizations: adaptable, efficient, honest, inhibited, kind, organized, reasonable, sincere, thorough, wholesome. LSM characterizations: deceitful, defensive, headstrong, irresponsible mischievous, outspoken, quarrelsome, rude, sarcastic, unconventional.

Sc (Self-control) - relates to expression of impulse and the management of aggression. HSM characterizations: considerate, dependable, hard-headed, logical, painstaking, precise, reasonable, reliable. LSM characterizations: conceited, fault-finding, hasty, headstrong, impulsive, individualistic, self-seeking, spunky, temperamental, unrealistic.

To (Tolerance) - reflects benign, progressive, and humanitarian feelings to feelings of hostility, estrangement, and disbelief. HSM characterizations: forgiving, generous, good-natured, independent, informal, pleasant, reasonable, soft-hearted, thoughtful, unselfish. LSM characterizations: affected, cold egotistical, fussy, hard-hearted, self-centered, shallow, thankless, whiny, fault-finding.

Gi (Good Impression) - assesses social desirability. HSM characterization: adaptable, changeable, considerate, kind, self-denying, soft-hearted, tactful, unselfish, warm, friendly. LSM characterizations: complaining, dissatisfied, fault-finding, hasty, headstrong, indifferent, nagging, pessimistic, temperamental, unkind.

Cm (Communality) - measures how much more a person is like other people than other people are. HSM characterizations: cautious, conscientious, deliberate, efficient, formal, organized, practical, responsible thorough, thrifty. LSM characterizations: attractive, careless, courageous, daring, distractible, forgetful, leisurely, pleasure-seeking, reckless, spendthrift.

Ac (Achievement via Conformance) - measures a strong need for achievement coupled with a deeply internalized appreciation of structure and organization.

HSM characterizations: ambitious, capable, conscientious, considerate, intelligent, logical, mature, reasonable, resourceful, responsible. LSM characterizations: apathetic, distrustful, hard-hearted, irresponsible, pleasure-seeking, reckless, rude, shallow, shiftless, zany.

Ai (Achievement via Independence) - measures achievement along independent, innovative, and self-actualizing lines. HSM characterizations: foresighted, independent, informal, intelligent, lazy, pleasant, rational, sarcastic, touchy, versatile. LSM characterizations: affected, bossy, cautious, cool, egotistical, fearful, frivolous, mannerly, smug, stern.

Ie (Intellectual Efficiency) - a subtle measure of intelligence, considering the ease and efficiency of directing and applying individual ability. HSM characterizations: capable, confident, efficient, foresighted, independent, intelligent, reasonable, self-controlled, sophisticated, unaffected. LSM characterizations: awkward, cold, forgetful, hard-hearted, interests narrow, queer, restless, sensitive, shallow, suggestible.

Py (Psychological-mindedness) - identifies psychological orientation and insightfulness concerning others. HSM characterizations: aloof, evasive, foresighted, independent, individualistic, persevering, preoccupied, reserved, unfriendly, wary. LSM characterizations: active, cheerful, energetic, flirtatious, humorous, kind, opportunistic, outgoing, sociable, talkative.

Fx (Flexibility) - identifies people of flexible, adaptable, even changeable temperament. HSM characterizations: easy going, fickle, independent, lazy, optimistic, pleasure-seeking, quick, sharp-witted, spendthrift, spontaneous. LSM characterizations: determined, efficient, hard-headed, organized, planful, practical, stern, stubborn, stolid, thorough.

Fe (Femininity) - differentiates between males and females, and between homosexual and heterosexual males. HSM characterizations: appreciative, complaining, feminine, formal, meek, nervous, self-denying, sensitive, weak, worrying. LSM characterizations: adventurous, aggressive, clear-thinking, daring, impulsive, masculine, outgoing, pleasure-seeking, show-off, strong.<sup>36</sup>

While most of the focus on interpreting the CPI focuses on the individual scales, there is also much to be gleaned from patterns and combinations among two or more of the scales. Changes in scores on one scale may alter the interpretive implications of scores from another scale. This argues strongly for

professional psychological interpretation not only of the CPI data, but from other assessment measurement devices as well. An illustration of the interaction between two scales, Ac (achievement via conformance) and Ai (achievement via independence), is presented in an example below:

Ac high			
idealistic	mannerly	Intelligent	logical
cautious	shy	interests wide	rational
conscientious	praising	inventive	realistic
nervous	inhibited	independent	active
helpful	dull	reasonable	stable
<div> <div>Ai</div> <div>low</div> </div>			
irresponsible	show-off	spunky	tolerant
careless	touchy	reckless	reliable
distrustful	undependable	unexcitable	courageous
disorderly	unstable	foresighted	distractible
indifferent	restless	pleasure-seeking	frank
<div> <div>Ac low<sup>37</sup></div> <div> <div>Ai</div> <div>high</div> </div> </div>			

The CPI may certainly provide a useful psychological assessment of personnel in order to shape a force characterized by psychological traits believed to be important for successful mission accomplishment. But believed to be important

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 59-74.

<sup>37</sup>McReynolds, pp. 74-75.

by whom? Mission planners? Commanders? Air Force Military Personnel Center? Psychologists? The issue of who would be the "players" in making determinations regarding the desired blend of personality traits will be addressed later.

### **The Sixteen Personality Factor Test (16PF)**

The 16PF test originated from the work of R.B. Cattell. Cattell and his co-workers identified 16 major source traits used in the construction of personality. The traits are listed in order of importance in controlling variations in behavior. The 16PF test has been widely used to *predict* vocational and academic success or failure. For the table below, a high score for a factor indicates a *tendency* to possess the traits on the left. Conversely, a low score for a factor indicates a *tendency* to possess the traits listed on the right side.<sup>38</sup>

	High score indicates a tendency toward:	Low score indicates a tendency toward:
Factor A.	<i>Cyclothymia</i> Socially adjusted Easygoing Warmhearted Frank	<i>Schizothymia</i> Socially hostile Indifferent Secretive
Factor B.	<i>Intelligence</i> Alert Imaginative Thoughtful Wise	<i>Unintelligent</i> Dull Stupid Unimaginative

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<sup>38</sup>Richard M Ryckman, Theories of Personality, (Pacific Grove, CA., Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1989), p. 246.

Factor C.	<i>Ego Strength</i> Unworried Mature Stoic Patient	<i>Ego Weakness</i> Anxious Infantile Worried Impatient
Factor E.	<i>Domination</i> Confident Boastful Aggressive Forceful	<i>Subordination</i> Unsure Modest Complacent Timid
Factor F.	<i>Surgency</i> Talkative Genial Cheerful Responsive Alert	<i>Desurgency</i> Silent Brooding Depressed Seclusive
Factor G.	<i>Superego Strength</i> Conscientious Responsible Persevering Loyal	<i>Superego Weakness</i> Unscrupulous Frivolous Irresolute Undependable
Factor H.	<i>Parmia</i> Carefree Overtly interested in sex Brave	<i>Threctia</i> Careful Overtly disinterested in sex Cowardly
Factor I.	<i>Premisia</i> Introspective Sensitive Sentimental Intuitive	<i>Haria</i> Insensitive Practical Logical Self-sufficient
Factor L.	<i>Protension</i> Suspicious Jealous Skeptical Wary	<i>Security</i> Credulous Trustful Unsuspecting Gullible

Factor M.	<i>Autia</i> Eccentric Placid Complacent Self-absorbed	<i>Praxernia</i> Practical Conventional Poised Earnest
Factor N.	<i>Shrewdness</i> Socially alert Insightful regarding others Expedient Calculating	<i>Naiveté</i> Socially clumsy Crude Indifferent Apathetic
Factor O.	<i>Guilt Proclivity</i> Timid Worrisome Depressed Moody	<i>Guilt Rejection</i> Self-confident Cheerful Without fear Self-sufficient
Factor Q(1).	<i>Radicalism</i> Encourages change Rejects convention Freethinking	<i>Conservatism</i> Rejects change Disgusted by foul language Conservative
Factor Q(2).	<i>Self-Sufficiency</i> Temperamentally independent Prefers working with a few assistants, rather than a committee Prefers reading to classes Prefers textbooks to novels	<i>Group-Sufficiency</i> Seeks social approval Group dependent Prefers to travel with others Believes there are more nice people than foul
Factor Q(3).	<i>Controlled Will</i> Believes in insurance rather than luck Sensitive to uncertainty Does not make promise he cannot keep Does not say things he later regrets	<i>Uncontrolled Will</i> Careless Rapidly changing interests Tries several approaches to the same problem Does not persevere in the face of obstacles

Factor Q(4).	<i>ID-Significance</i>	<i>ID-Insignificance</i>
	Free-floating anxiety	Relaxes
	Unexpected lapses of memory	Composed
	Suffers frustration because of unsatisfied physiological needs	Few periods of depression
		Disinclined to worry <sup>39</sup>

Cattell's work and the 16PF test have had extensive practical application.

It has proved to be a reliable mechanism in assessing personality traits, and provided useful information with regards to occupational suitability and compatibility. Management supervisors in both business and industry have utilized the 16PF test in making decisions about the placement of workers in jobs best suited to their individual talents and personalities. Additionally, the British SAS continues to use the 16PF test in the psychological assessment portion of their selection process for new recruits.

### **The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)**

A point continually stressed during discussions relating to Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality assessment is that there are no right or wrong preferences. The MBTI may also provide a relevant means for assessing personality characteristics of potential benefit to improve SOF aircrew performance. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is designed to make Carl Jung's theory of psychological types understandable and useful in everyday life. The MBTI indicates the differences in people that result from:

- where they prefer to focus their attention (Extroversion or Introversion).

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<sup>39</sup>B.R. Hergenhahn, An Introduction to Theories of Personality, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ., Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1984), pp. 153-154.

- the way they prefer to take in information (Sensing or iNtuition).
- the way they prefer to make decisions (Thinking or Feeling).
- how they orient themselves to the external world; whether they primarily use a judging process or perceiving process in relating to the outer world (Judging or Perceiving).<sup>40</sup>

Let's briefly look at each one of these facets of the four preference pairs.

Extroversion - tends to focus on the outer world of people and external events. They direct their energy and attention outward and receive energy from external events, experiences, and interactions.

Introversion - tends to focus on their own inner world of ideas and experiences. They direct their energy from their internal thoughts, feelings, and reflections.

Sensing - likes to take in information through their eyes, ears, and other senses to find out what is actually happening. They are observant of what is going on around them and are especially good at recognizing the practical realities of a situation.

Intuition - likes to take in information by seeing the big picture, focusing on the relationship and connections between facts. They want to grasp patterns and are especially good at seeing new possibilities and different ways of doing things.

Thinking - tends to look at the logical consequences of a choice or action. They try to mentally remove themselves from a situation to examine it objectively and analyze cause and effect. Their goal is an objective standard of truth and application of principles. Their strengths include figuring out what is wrong with

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 3.



something so they can apply their problem-solving abilities.

Feeling - tends to consider what is important to them and to other people. They mentally place themselves in a situation and identify with the people involved so that they can make decisions based on person-centered values. Their goal is harmony and recognition of individuals, and their strengths include understanding, appreciating, and supporting others.

Judging - tends to live in a planned, orderly way, wanting to regulate and control life. They make decisions, come to closure, and move on. Their lifestyle is structured and organized, and they like to have things settled. Sticking to a plan and schedule is very important to them, and they enjoy their ability to get things done.

Perceiving - tends to live in a flexible, spontaneous way, seeking to experience and understand life, rather than control it. Plans and decisions feel confining to them; they prefer to stay open to experience and last-minute options. They enjoy and trust their resourcefulness and ability to adapt to the demands of a situation.<sup>41</sup>

So MBTI concludes that every individual functions in a personality context described by E or I, S or N, T or F, and J or P. Therefore, there 16 possible personality "types" according to Jung and the MBTI. These are: ISTJ; ISTP; ESTP; ESTJ; ISFJ; ISFP; ESFP; ESFJ; INFJ; INFP; ENFP; ENFJ; INTJ; INTP; ENTP; and ENTJ. Each of the 16 types come from a different place and move toward a different end, often taking different approaches.

Additionally, there are three sets of personality "preference combinations" which can describe the way an individual's personality will cause him to function. The first "preference combination" set is judgment (T/F) and external orientation (J/P).

- TJs are logical decision makers. They tend to be tough-minded, analytical, and instrumental leaders. They make decisions based on principles and systems, overall impacts, and rational analysis of outcomes.
- TPs are adaptable thinkers. They tend to be objective, skeptical, and curious, especially about materials or possibilities. They create consistent and orderly frameworks for understanding and leading.
- FPs are gentle types. They tend to be adaptable, seek harmony and affiliation, and are concerned with the human aspects of problems. They lead by encouragement and coaching.
- FJs are benevolent administrators. They tend to be observant about people and their needs, and bring harmony into relationships. They make decisions based on personal values and identification with others. They are expressive leaders who inspire and teach others.<sup>42</sup>

The second "preference combination" set concerns perception (S/N) and judgment (T/F).

- STs *focus on facts, handle these with applying facts and experience, thus tend to become practical and analytical, and find scope for their abilities in technical skills with facts and objectives.*
- SFs *focus on facts, handle these with meeting the daily concerns of people, thus tend to become sympathetic and friendly, and find scope for their abilities in practical help and services for people.*
- NFs *focus on possibilities, handle these with understanding the aspirations of people, thus tend to become enthusiastic and insightful, and find scope for their abilities in understanding and communicating.*
- NTs *focus on possibilities, handle these with developing theoretical concepts, thus tend to become logical and analytical, and find scope for their abilities in theoretical and technical developments.*<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p.4-5.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

The third "preference combination" set addresses direction of energy (E/I) and orientation to the external world (J/P).

- IJs are the Decisive Introverts. They tend to be introspective and persevering; changing requires evidence which fits with their internal receptors.
- IPs are the Adaptable Introverts. They tend to be introspective, adaptable in little things, and firm on issues important to them.
- EPs are the Adaptable Extroverts. They tend to be active, energetic, and sociable; deal with change readily and seek new experiences.
- EJs are the Decisive Extroverts. They tend to be fast-moving, confident-looking, decisive; they enjoy making things happen.<sup>44</sup>

So the MBTI suggests that individuals all have different approaches to life, work, relaxation, and relationships. The interests that people possess are as natural to them as their hair color, eye color, or body build. Acceptance of the tenets of the MBTI results in acceptance of the fact that certain types or kinds of work will be of more interest to some than to others. "Interest" in work will contribute to greater involvement, productivity, and accomplishment. The MBTI is another "tool" that could be used to assist in making fact-based decisions concerning the selection of new AFSOF aircrew personnel.

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **What's The Right "Type" For Air Force SOF?**

Since 1976 when I first started flying in Air Force special operations, I've flown with hundreds of people. Obviously some had better skills, leadership as well as flying, than others - but why? In a profession where physical or intellectual prowess has relatively little to do with success, why are some people markedly superior to others? Personality type may have a good deal to do with it. In an endeavor such as flying, where adherence to regulations, checklists, and procedures are of paramount importance, it would certainly seem that some personality types might perform better than others. Couple the precision required in flying with the demanding, high-risk, time critical, dangerous nature of special operations, and personality type could become an even more important factor. For example, consider flying a night, low-level mission deep into enemy territory to infiltrate an Army special forces team on a small, unmarked drop zone within a two-minute time window. Or, consider an aircrew of anywhere from three to ten personnel, down behind enemy lines and in danger of capture. Now reflect first on some key phrases from the MMPI: cynical and defeatist; despondent and distressed; fearful, rigid and anxious. Also, consider some CPI trait variables: forceful, optimistic, planful versus indifferent, irresponsible, reckless; imaginative, independent, mature versus gloomy, resentful, tense; confident, enterprising, opportunistic versus quitting, unintelligent, and withdrawn. Next, review some 16PF identifiable traits: self-confident, without fear, self-sufficient versus timid, worrisome, and depressed; eccentric, complacent, self-absorbed versus practical, poised, and earnest. Lastly, consider some

MBTI descriptive word pairs:

Sensing

concrete  
realistic  
pragmatic  
experimental  
traditional

iNtuitive

abstract  
imaginative  
intellectual  
theoretical  
original

Judging

stress avoider  
systematic  
scheduled  
follow plan  
methodical

Perceiving

flexible  
casual  
spontaneous  
open-ended  
emergent<sup>45</sup>

Now remember the need to fly the above specific mission or escape capture as an evader behind enemy lines. Both as a squadron commander and crewmember, I would prefer to have fellow crewmembers whose personality traits are more from the left-hand column of the MBTI, or with very few negative traits from the MMPI, and with positive traits as determined from the CPI or 16PF. Conversely, if the mission were flying training in a structured school house environment, or perhaps in-depth deliberate planning, maybe individuals with traits from the right-hand column would be more preferable. People who are *iNtuitive* and Perceiving tend to be more imaginative, intellectual, theoretical, original, flexible, open-ended and emergent. Different jobs call for different talents. Certainly psychological preferences, strengths and weaknesses should be considered germane in putting the right person in the right job.

The Quality Air Force goal of continuous improvement requires us to develop innovative new ways to provide for our nation's defense more effectively and efficiently.

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<sup>45</sup>Dr. Bill Knowlton and LTC Mike McGee, "Strategic Leadership and Personality: Making the MBTI Relevant." Industrial College of the Armed Forces, National Defense

Intelligent defense resource allocation (of personnel) compels us to get the right person into the right job to increase the probability of mission success. The right people in the right unit can have a dynamic and dramatic impact. As Steven Lambakis writes in

*Comparative Strategy*:

Colonel Yasotay, an officer in Genghis Khan's army, is said to have told his general, "when the hour of crisis comes, remember that 40 selected men can shake the world." The colonel, of course, was not referring to the existence of godlike figures from Roman or Greek mythology, or a band of superwarriors capable of single-handedly destroying whole armies and conquering entire nations. The point here is more subtle and complex: When undertaking missions of importance to the state or a military campaign, a small and audacious force of skilled warriors has the capability to influence events far beyond any physical measure of their capability. Colonel Yasotay's insight on employing forces cost effectively should not go unheeded in a time when the armed forces of the United States are held captive to deep budget cuts and ever declining force levels.<sup>46</sup>

The message from these words is perhaps more relevant today than ever before. The studied application of sound psychological analysis as a basis for selection of personnel volunteering for Air Force special operations aircrew duty could provide a force whose personality traits would increase the probability of effectiveness and mission success.

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University, Ft. McNair, Washington, DC. 1994. p. 9.

<sup>46</sup>Steven Lambakis, "Forty Selected Men Can Shake the World: The Contributions of Special Operations to Victory." *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 13 (1994). p. 211.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **Getting Started on the Right Track**

To initiate a program of psychological assessment for selection of AFSOC aircrew initiated, I would recommend the following:

1. Charter at HQ AFSOC, a team to work with psychologists from within the Air Force, and through the auspices of USSOCOM, incorporate psychologists from sister SOF units. This team would explore, in-depth, the utility and feasibility of a psychological assessment program for AFSOC. Certainly the psychological measurement tools discussed in this paper, and in use by sister-service SOF, could provide a start point for discussing the basis for an AFSOC selection/assessment program.
2. If determined feasible, begin psychological testing of "highly successful" SOF aircrew. This testing program should involve officer and enlisted from all AFSOC weapon systems. The term "highly successful" could be defined as the best AFSOC has to offer: Successful combat veterans; aircrew who have largely reacted in an exemplary manner in demanding operations, training scenarios or during in-flight emergencies; commanders, operations officers, evaluators and some instructor aircrew. Personnel selected should embody the spirit of a SOF warrior, and not be tested only because of their duty qualification. Test results could provide a baseline of psychological traits and characteristics found in highly successful AFSOF crewmembers.
3. Examine the data gathered in step 2, looking for common threads of trait and personality which are present in successful SOF aircrew. If significant and pertinent data can be identified, use that data to as a basis to address beginning a formal process of psychological assessment in the selection of SOF aircrew personnel.

These steps could be the first along a path that leads to manning AFSOC aircraft with better AFSOF aircrew personnel. Certainly AFSOC owes to our sister-service SOF not only the absolute best in aircraft, but in aircrew as well. Using psychological assessment in the selection of AFSOF aircrew could significantly increase the quality of service provide by AFSOC.

## **CHAPTER IX**

### **Conclusion**

United States Special Operations Command forces are composed of SOF personnel from the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Two of these three services take extensive and arduous measures to ensure the quality of personnel entering their special operations forces. While the Army and Navy put potential special operators through demanding physical and psychological assessment, the Air Force mans its special operations forces with people sent there by to Air Force Military Personnel Center. There is no psychological assessment. There is no physical fitness test. There is no measurement whatsoever to see if the people sent to AFSOC have what it takes to perform at a level equal to the SOF of the Army and Navy. An adage often heard in special operations circles is "we can't afford to fail." The Air Force could very well be setting itself up for failure by its negligence in insuring that AFSOF personnel measure up to the same exacting standards, mental and physical, that the Army and Navy use in their recruitment processes.

In his article entitled "America's Approach to Special Operations," Ambassador H. Allen Holmes, The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, offers "...the success of our special operations forces, our warrior-diplomats, depends heavily on the high quality of these personnel. In this respect, mental discipline is even more important than physical discipline. Special operations forces are recruited and trained accordingly."<sup>47</sup> I believe Ambassador Holmes has misspoken. Air Force special operations personnel are not recruited and trained based on "mental discipline." But they should be. If the Air Force is going to be equal partners with the Army and Navy in the special operations business,

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<sup>47</sup> Ambassador H. Allen Holmes, "America's Approach to Special Operations." *Defense*



a business becoming more important in this uncertain world, then the Air Force needs to be more selective and demanding in its personnel selection process. A deliberate assessment and selection process involving psychological evaluation will improve the quality of personnel serving in Air Force Special Operations and help insure that the Air Force component of the joint SOF effort is not the "weak link" in the chain. We, the Air Force, truly cannot afford to fail; there is too much at stake - too many lives at risk. We must take every measure conceivable to build and maintain the world's finest Air Force special operations force.

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